



# Communist University Introductions

*These texts may be used as “openings to discussion” of the original reading texts that are supplied by the CU. They are not intended to be authoritative or conclusive. They are contributions to discussion like any other such contributions. The introductions are not a substitute for the reading texts.*

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## Induction, Part 0



[Luca Pacioli, 1445-1517](#)

# Induction: What it is, and what it is not

“Induction” is the process of making a new recruit, or a promoted person, aware of everything necessary for an individual to perform normal duties in an organisation, at any level.

Induction is therefore not the same thing as “Political Education”, and this course will contain relatively little of what is usually regarded as politics, as compared to other Communist University courses. (For an introductory course in political matters, please use the “Basics” course that we have just completed.)

## History of organisation

On the other hand, the material of the course is far from being without political consequences. Organisation is not class-neutral, and it is not apolitical. It has a history, and it has a pre-history of social structure even if unselfconscious and only led by “organic intellectuals”.

The conscious principles of organisation are as old as the origin of the family, private property and the state. The oldest forms of organisation within class-divided society are religious, legal and military, corresponding to the necessities of the original state (when society first divided into antagonistic classes).

Among the oldest still-existing corporations in the West are the Church of Rome and its orders. Notable among them is the order of St Benedict (480–547), originating shortly after the fall of the Roman Empire of the West. The Benedictine model relied, not on allegiance to a central power, but on adherence to a common set of rules (“[St. Benedict’s Rule](#)”). In other words, it was truly “organised”. It relied on organisation more than it relied on what is nowadays called a “power structure” or central command. In this course, we shall continue to sustain the critical distinction between power and organisation, or in other words, between the mechanically hierarchical and the socially organic.

## From Monasteries to Companies

The monastic tradition that St Benedict successfully codified had earlier been brought to Europe from Africa, and it may have originated further East, possibly in India. With this donation, Africa helped to rescue Europe. It was the monasteries that eventually brought Western Europe back from its descent into barbarism. The Church provided the clerical framework and bureaucracy that the European states needed while they grew again slowly, over a period of a thousand years, during the centuries of feudalism that are called “The Dark Ages” and “The Middle Ages”.

Secular trading corporations and permanent military organisation (standing armies and navies) did not arrive until the bourgeoisie became (first in Italy) a prosperous and powerful class, and at last, from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries onwards, a ruling class in the Netherlands and in Britain.

The word “Office” comes from the Italian “Uffizi”, notably used in Renaissance Florence. [Double-entry book-keeping](#) was developed during the Italian Renaissance, in Florence and in Genoa, and was for the first time described as a system by Luca Pacioli, a Franciscan Friar and friend of Leonardo da Vinci’s, in Milan.

The bourgeois ability to organise on a large scale, and to project its organisation overseas, meant that European culture at last surpassed, in many ways, the level of development that the ancient Romans had achieved and then lost, more than a thousand years before. Unfortunately, bourgeois society was also no less brutal and cruel than that of the Romans. In the beginning of its ascendancy, it relied, as the Romans had done, on chattel slavery.

The ways and means of bourgeois organisation were among the reasons for the success of capitalism over all other systems, most spectacularly so following the French Revolution of 1789, its export by force of arms under Napoleon Bonaparte, and the contemporaneous bourgeois “Industrial Revolution” in England.

By the fifth decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, bourgeois capitalism (that is, wage slavery as opposed to chattel slavery) was set to rule the world, such that in the same historic moment, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were able to observe in the Communist Manifesto of 1848:

*“All fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real condition of life and his relations with his kind.... the bourgeoisie... must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.”*

### **Enter the grave-digger**

So long as the opponents of capitalism have less-well-developed means of organisation, they are very unlikely to be able to succeed in overthrowing the bourgeois class from its seat of power. But the working-class proletariat that the bourgeoisie brings forth from the old agrarian society that it has ruined, is drilled and organised - by the bourgeoisie - like no other before it.

All that remains is for the working class to become a self-conscious class for itself (the political task of the communists) and then to seize hold of all the means that the bourgeoisie has developed, and forced the working class to learn. The working class must become better at all kinds of organisation than the previous masters of organisation, the bourgeoisie, have been. And this is very possible.

Therefore, although we may appear in this course to be considering other matters than politics, yet our motives for doing so are extremely political. These are some of the indispensable means to political power, and that is why we want to possess them.

Attached, please find Amilcar Cabral's pamphlet "Apply Party Principles in Practice". In it, please note that a "watchword" means the same as what we would call a "slogan".

- The above is supported by an original reading-text: [Amilcar Cabral, 1924-1973, Apply Party Principles in Practice](#).

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## Induction, Part 1



# SACP Constitution: Definition and Rules

## *Clauses 1 to 7*

The jewel of the [SACP Constitution](#) is **Rule 6.5**, which says:

*"Members active in fraternal organisations or in any sector of the mass movement have a duty to set an example of loyalty, hard work and zeal in the performance of their duties and shall be bound by the discipline and decisions of such organisations and the movement."*

*“They shall not create or participate in SACP caucuses within such organisations and the movement designed to influence either elections or policies.*

*“The advocacy of SACP policy on any question relating to the internal affairs of any such organisations or the movement shall be by open public statements or at joint meetings between representatives of the SACP and such organisations or the movement.”*

This means that SACP members active in any part of the mass movement, including the workers’ trade unions, and including the ANC, do so in the utmost good faith.

SACP members serve the mass organisations on the terms of those organisations.

This clause is the backbone of the Alliance of the SACP with the ANC and COSATU, including COSATU’s affiliates.

The rule means that SACP members can be trusted, and they are in fact trusted. It is because the mass organisations understand this rule that the alliance has been so solid, for so long.

### **Aims of communism**

The first aim (Rule 3.1) of the SACP is that:

*“The SACP strives to be the leading political force of the South African working class whose interests it promotes in the struggle to advance, deepen and defend the national democratic revolution and to achieve socialism.”*

What newly-inducted communists need to grasp, more than any other thing, is that the fruit of the work of the communists is born on other trees, and not in a private communist orchard.

The communists are concerned with what the non-communists are doing. The Party’s business is to educate, organise and mobilise masses of people who are not communists. Among the SACP’s “guiding principles” are the following:

*“4.2 Organise, educate and lead the working class in the struggle for socialism and the more immediate objectives of defending and deepening the national democratic revolution and of achieving national and social emancipation. The main aim of the unfolding national democratic revolution is to complete the national liberation of the African people in particular and black people in general, to ensure the destruction of the legacy of white supremacy, and the strengthening of democracy in every sphere of life...”*

*“4.3 Organise, educate and advance women within the working class, the poor and rural communities in pursuit of the aims of the SACP; and to raise the consciousness of the working class and its allies around the integral and oppressive nature of gender relations within South African capitalism.”*

The Communist Party is not a sect. It has no interests separate from those of the working class. The working class, as the most advanced class, represents the best interests of the entire society. As the vanguard of the working class, and via the working class, the Communist Party is the vanguard of the nation.

By its constitution, therefore, SACP members are bidden to mix with and to partake in the political life of the whole population, outside of the Communist Party itself. The Party's rules tell you how to behave when you are doing so.

This concern with the ways and means of SACP work within the broad movement will continue throughout our Induction course.

### **Mastering the SACP Constitution**

The SACP Constitution, as a whole, is a model of how a constitution needs to be written. It is as brief as it can be, and as direct as it can be. Where necessary, it is sufficiently detailed. It is a very fine document, of which SACP members can be justly proud.

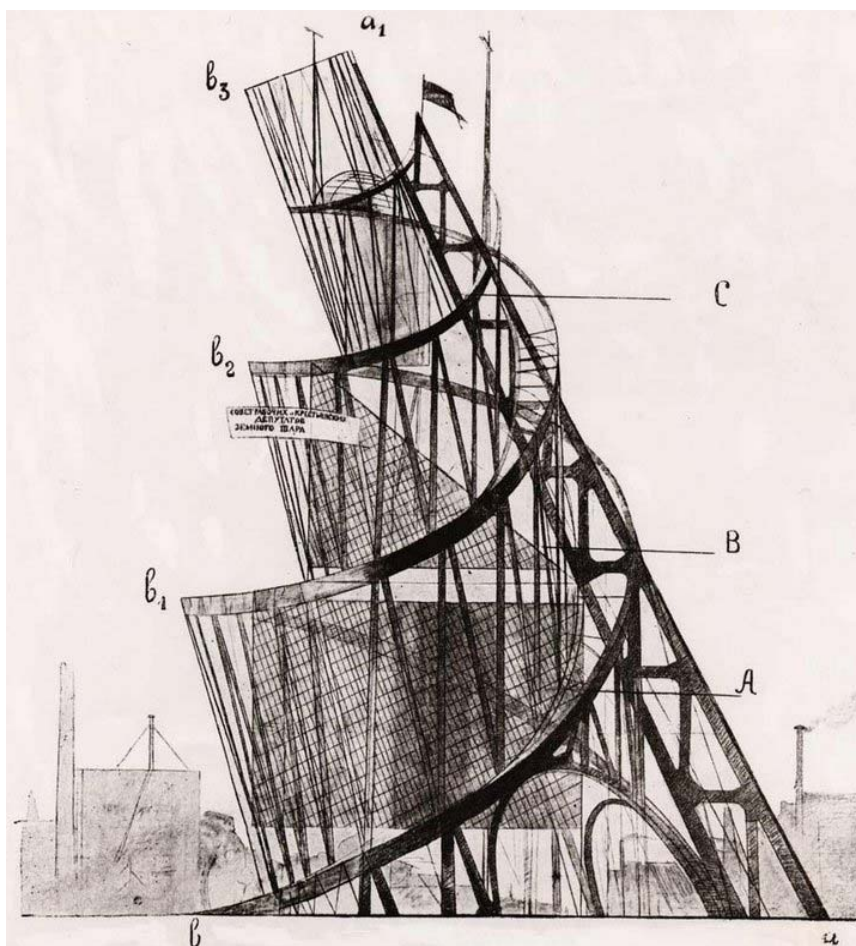
The attached brief document contains clauses 1 to 7 of the SACP Constitution. The next item will carry the remainder of the clauses (8 to 26).

Broadly, clauses 1 to 7 contain the political prescription for the Party, and the distinguishing features of the Party, while the remainder describes the Party's structure.

Clause 7 enables the establishment of the Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA) - the autonomous youth organisation of the SACP. We will return to the YCL in more detail in a later part of this Induction course.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [SACP Constitution, Definition and Rules, 2012.](#)
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Tower of the Third International, Vladimir Tatlin

## SACP Constitution: Structure

The attached document contains from clause 8 to the final clause 26 of the SACP Constitution.

Clauses 8 to 23, in length more than half of the entire constitution, are taken up with the structures of the Party, from the National Congress down to Branches and Units. All of these clauses are straightforward and easy to understand, but they are detailed, and the detail is necessary and should not be taken for granted.

Clauses 8 to 23 should be read in the light of Clause 6, which is in the previous item of this part of our Induction course.

The SACP functions according to the principles of democratic centralism (Clause 6.1). This means that all decisions taken by higher structures are binding on all lower structures and on individual members (Clause 6.2). All higher structures shall be accountable to lower structures via suitable councils and congresses (Clause 6.3).

The basic structure of the SACP is the branch, to be formed at a residential area or workplace, and every member shall be obliged to belong to a branch (Clause 22). The Central Committee sets a policy framework for the determination of the boundaries of branches that takes into account the ward and voting district boundaries within a municipality (Clause 22).

Here is a diagrammatic, simplified representation of the structure of the SACP:

Committee	Accountable to	Term	Subsidiary	Office Bearers
Central	National Congress	5 Years	Political Bureau	General Secretary + 5
Provincial Executive	Provincial Council, Congress	3 Years	Working Committee	Provincial Secretary + 5
District Executive	District Council, Congress	2 Years	Working Committee	District Secretary + 4
Branch Executive	BGM, ABM	1 Year	-	Branch Secretary + 4
<i>Unit</i>	<i>BEC</i>	<i>1 Year</i>	-	-

Members who are elected to positions at a higher level may not stand for election to positions at a lower level in the SACP (Clause 6.6).

Delegates are members of Congresses that they attend. Delegates have a duty to fairly and effectively convey to Congress the mandate of the constituency that elected them, but they are not rigidly bound by such mandates (Clause 6.7).

As a rule, Units are not supposed to exist for more than one year in total (Clause 23.1). Units may be formed for several purposes, the most common being preparation for the launching of new branches.

The rules of the SACP are simple and clear. This brief summary represents the essence of them. Please refer to the actual Constitution and do not use this summary to rule in any situation.

Clause 24 deals with “quorum” rules. Clauses 25 and 26 are on disciplinary and amendments procedures.

- **The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [SACP Constitution, Structure, 2012](#).**





## History of the SACP

The leading political institutions of South Africa in 2014 - those that form the National Democratic Revolutionary Alliance - all have their origins in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, around a hundred years ago. The earliest of these was the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), established in 1912. The SANNC became the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923.

The second was the International Socialist League (ISL), established in 1915. The third was the Industrial Workers of Africa, a black workers' union established by the ISL in 1917.

The Industrial Workers of Africa was overtaken by the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, established in 1919, which also received communist support. In the 1940s, the Congress of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) was founded, in the 1950s SACTU, and in the 1980s, COSATU, all with communist support.

The ISL was the main component of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), formalised as such in 1921. After it was banned in 1950, the CPSA became the South African Communist Party (SACP).

The ANC received communist support throughout, and this support was returned. When the CPSA was banned in 1950, the ANC protested on the first Freedom Day, June 26<sup>th</sup> of that year, and later with the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign that began in 1952.

### One history

The history of the CPSA and its successor the SACP is woven together, from the beginning, with the history of the liberation movement, and with the history of the trade union movement, of which the biggest component is presently the COSATU

federation. The history of the Party cannot be told separately, without reference to these other two.

Nor can this history be separated from the history of the world in a century of great wars, of the appearance of capitalist Imperialism, and of the October, 1917 Russian Revolution, which changed everything, but which also arose out of the same global circumstances.

These global circumstances included the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, and the first wave of capitalist Imperialism of which that war was a major part. The circumstances included the subsequent outbreak of intra-Imperialist conflict over the entire globe, known as the First World War, of 1914-18.

The First World War began with the betrayal of the Second Workers' International by its components in Britain, Germany and France, who agreed to fight and to produce for their bourgeois governments. Without this betrayal, the war was not going to be possible. Those who did not sell out in this way in 1914 included V I Lenin and the Bolsheviks; Rosa Luxemburg and the Spartacists; and our South African International Socialist League, the ISL.

In April 1917 at the Finland Station in Petrograd, Lenin proposed, among other things, the formation of a new International, which would demand that its affiliates were fully communist. This became the Communist, or Third, International, also known as the Comintern, founded in 1919. Within two years of its founding, in 1921, the Communist Party of South Africa, based on the ISL, was admitted to Comintern membership.

### **Time Line**

The attached document is a "time line", or list of events, with dates given, and very brief remarks. It is partly derived from "The Red Flag", a popular history of the Party compiled around 1990, after the unbanning. Other sources are also listed in the document, which is designed for printing on A4, back to back, and not as is usual with the CU, as a booklet.

An earlier version of this document, in a different format again, and containing detailed references, is also attached.

### **Summary**

The 1920s were marked by the decisive turn to the "Black Republic Thesis", strongly influenced by the Comintern. The 1930s were marked by sectarianism, and then by the escape from sectarianism. In the 1940s, according to the book "The Red Flag",

the CPSA was larger than the ANC. The African Miners' Strike of 1946 changed everything. So did the election of the National Party to power, two years later.

In the 1950s the ANC took off, and one of the reasons was the strong involvement of the communists, whose own party had been banned. The ANC spoke to the world from the 1950s onwards, and it continued to do so after the banning of the ANC that came ten years after the banning of the Party, following the Sharpeville massacre of 1960.

It is necessary to see South African history together with that of the continent. There was never a lull. Extraordinary things happened, throughout.

The liberation struggle pushed onwards through the 1960s, 70s and eighties until at last in February, 1990, the unbanning of both organisations occurred.

Our timeline document goes up to 1994. Since then, the Party and the ANC have both grown and are now organised across the entire country. COSATU has also grown, but at a slower rate. The Womens' Movement as such has not grown. The rendering of the country into an organised, democratic mass is therefore proceeding, but in an uneven way.

This is not a full history of the Party. It may be sufficient for the purposes of Induction, so that comrades have an idea of the outline of our history. But you need to read more of it, and in more detail.

The struggle continues.

- **The above is to introduce an original reading-text: History of the SACP, [version 1 and 2](#).**

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### Induction, Part 1c



**A Chinese Party Card**

# Joining the Party

Attached are two documents. One is the SACP's advice, given on its web site, but slightly edited, as to how to join. The other document is the SACP's application form. Let us hope that you are already through the process of joining the SACP, because it can be full of pitfalls. One reason for studying it as a process is so that one can assist others to come through successfully, and in good time.

Apart from the difficulty of joining the Party, one may also take a critical view of the "duties" and the "pillars" as described on the SACP web page, because for the purposes of this course, we need to develop an integrated (i.e. "concrete") understanding of the nature and the purpose of the Party, of the ANC and of COSATU and its affiliates.

The SACP is a vanguard Party, not by claim, or by inheritance, but only by virtue of study. What we call "political education" is not merely a re-telling of the laid-down nature of the existing Party, but it is the very essence of the process that the Party is engaged in.

There is no higher authority than the Party that could award it the franchise of revolution. Nor does the Party gain its leading role by competitively destroying the efforts of others. From the beginning, for example in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, the communists have said they would not do that. The communists do not claim any kind of monopoly.

## **The foundation is study**

It follows that whatever role the Party may play is founded upon nothing else than study. It is because we study that we are able to see the whole picture, if we can at all. It is because we study that we are able to see beyond our immediate self-interest, whereas the mass organisations are less well equipped to do so. The mass organisations are based on simple, mutual, sectional self-interest.

This is what distinguishes the mass organisations from the vanguard Party. The mass organisations, including trade unions, rest on the immediate self-perceived self-interest of the participants, and this is how it should be.

The Party encourages people to organise democratically, according to their lights, even though limited in the first place to common self-interest.

It is we as the Party who have made ourselves professionally responsible, by virtue of study, for being able to see wider than immediate self-interest of sections, towards the best interests of the whole society.

Therefore Party membership becomes an obligation to study, because, other than what is gained by study, the Party has no rights whatsoever. If you are not prepared to study and to continue studying, then you have no business to be joining the Communist Party.

### **Not a numbers game**

Nobody is compelled to be a communist. Nor is it crucial that there are very large numbers of communists. The numbers that are required are those that are sufficient to maintain the Party's country-wide mission to educate, organise and mobilise; and no more.

The Party does not set out to “convert” the whole population. The Party does not, for example, set out to convert every sports club into a political cell. To the extent that a Party member has a communist duty in a sports club, it would be, firstly, to help make it a better sports club, and then, perhaps, a more democratic one; but not to try to annex it to the communist party.

In the next part of this course we will look more deeply into the necessity for mass democratic organisation. We will draw out further, the distinction between, and the functional organic relation between, the democratic mass organisations and their vanguard Party of professional revolutionaries.

The work of communists in any country is done outside their Party, among non-communists.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [How to join the Party; SACP application form](#).

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### **Induction, Part 2**



**The Blob, film poster, 1958**



# Tyranny of Structurelessness

*"Always in the bourgeois mind is this legend of the golden age, of a perfectly good man corrupted by institutions. Unfortunately not only is man not good without institutions, he is not evil either. He is no man at all; he is neither good nor evil; he is an unconscious brute."*

**Christopher Caudwell, "Liberty", from "Studies in a Dying Culture", 1938**

Jo Freeman is from the Women's Movement in the USA. At a certain point in its development a crisis developed in this movement, and a confrontation between those who were trying to organise, versus those who were proposing that the movement should be "structureless".

Jo Freeman took the side of organisation. Her experience, words and argument can help us in our Induction course to understand the fundamental reasons why organisation is necessary. Her full article, Tyranny of Structurelessness, is attached.

The case that Jo Freeman makes should be born in mind as we proceed later on in this Induction course to look at organising skills, processes, rules, ways and means. Such things are not trivial. They are the material substance of our work. Without them there is no politics.

Organisation does not of itself trap people; it liberates them. Organisation is also unavoidable. Says Freeman:

*"Contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a structureless group. Any group of people of whatever nature that comes together for any length of time for any purpose will inevitably structure itself in some fashion. The structure may be flexible; it may vary over time; it may evenly or unevenly distribute tasks, power and resources over the members of the group. But it will be formed..."*

Freeman is not unaware that hers is a criticism of bourgeois ideology. She goes on:

*'This means that to strive for a structureless group is as useful, and as deceptive, as to aim at an "objective" news story, "value-free" social science, or a "free" economy. A "laissez faire" group is about as realistic as a "laissez faire" society; the idea becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. This hegemony can be so easily established because the idea of "structurelessness" does not prevent the formation of informal structures, only formal ones. Similarly "laissez faire" philosophy did not prevent the economically powerful from establishing*

*control over wages, prices, and distribution of goods; it only prevented the government from doing so. Thus structurelessness becomes a way of masking power, and within the women's movement is usually most strongly advocated by those who are the most powerful...'*

The communists, like Christopher Caudwell, quoted above, advocate for organisation, and more specifically for democratic organisation. The National Democratic Revolution is a process of the democratic organisation of society in all necessary ways, and especially as mass democratic organisation. The NDR is not solely concerned with representative state democracy. Representative democracy without mass democratic organisation will revert to something like structurelessness, where the power structures are either hidden, or are out of reach of ordinary people.

Freeman continues:

*"For everyone to have the opportunity to be involved in a given group and to participate in its activities the structure must be explicit, not implicit. The rules of decision-making must be open and available to everyone, and this can happen only if they are formalized. This is not to say that formalization of a structure of a group will destroy the informal structure. It usually doesn't. But it does hinder the informal structure from having predominant control and make available some means of attacking it if the people involved are not at least responsible to the needs of the group at large. "Structurelessness" is organizationally impossible. We cannot decide whether to have a structured or structureless group, only whether or not to have a formally structured one."*

In this Induction course, starting from Part 3, we will look at how structure can be made "explicit and not implicit", by formal means, and at how this works in practice.

Meanwhile in the remainder of this Part 2, we will reflect on the role of political education within the organisation, as a generator and a regenerator of organisation. We will look at the specifics of Trade Union organisation, and at the nature of Unions as mass (not vanguard) organisations.

We will finish the part with a consideration of the relationship between Mass and Vanguard, including the limitations of what the Party can do, but which must be done by the mass movement.

- **The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Tyranny of Structurelessness, Jo Freeman, 1973](#).**



## Political education for organisation-building

When the Communist University began to do systematic political education in the Johannesburg Central Branch of the SACP, and in the Onica Mashego Branch of the ANC, from 2003, it felt a need for a statement of the purposes of such political education.

What were we trying to achieve? What were our goals? These were the first questions on our minds.

A document was produced. It has been edited many times since then. The most recent version (updated in 2009) is attached.

In the first paragraph it says:

*“The main purpose of political education is to prepare cadres who can do the work of the organisation. As soon as a leadership is formed it begins to deplete, because comrades are deployed to higher structures. Others move away. For*

*these reasons the branch needs to generate a steady stream of new cadres who are ready to take up the leadership and administration of the branch.”*

The Communist University has grown, to the point that this Induction course was the fourteenth full ten-week study-circle course to be prepared, out of a (now) full complement of sixteen. Other formats have also been developed, notably the successful half-day school format.

The CU has produced, as one of its sixteen standard courses, an entire ten-week course on Education and its place in society, including revolutionary pedagogical theory.

As we have already discovered in this Induction course, study is the only source and basis of the Communist Party’s vanguard role in relation to the working class, and to society as a whole.

### **Replenishing the cadre**

So that, whereas other purposes than “*preparing cadres who can do the work of the organisation*” were already being described in the attached document, yet in this Induction course, it remains most necessary to problematise the matter that was at the front of our minds in the Communist University, at its beginning.

This was the production, and reproduction, of cadres of the Party and of the ANC, not only in theoretical, but also in practical terms.

It remains as true now as it was then, that the cadre force at Branch level begins to deplete as soon as it forms, necessitating the constant recruitment and improvement of new members, to the level of cadreship.

### **Decade of the Cadre**

What exactly is a cadre? This is a good question for discussion, especially now that the ANC has, at its 53<sup>rd</sup> National Conference at Mangaung, announced the Decade of the Cadre.

One of the answers could be that a *cadre* (in the French-language meaning of the word) is literally a ruler (straight-edge), or a frame. The human framework that holds up an organisation and gives it shape, is the cadre. In that sense the cadre is a collective noun, meaning a number of people together, forming the framework, or structure.

In South Africa, a cadre may be, and usually is, understood to refer to an individual. Such a cadre is a person who is fully equipped to operate independently and to extend the organisation wherever he or she finds herself.

Both of these definitions are useful, and they do not contradict each other.

### **Agenda of the cadre**

In those days we said *“the branch needs to generate a steady stream of new cadres who are ready to take up the leadership and administration of the branch.”* We made a distinction between leadership, and administration. The first is the domain of politics, while the second is also political, but it has more to do with organisation – the conscious creation of structure – as a practical task.

Hence at last we were bound to return to the details of administration of the kinds that are being dealt with in this Induction course. Cadres must be able to reproduce and expand the organisation, and to expand organisation in general. They must know how it works, very practically.

After Induction, in our CU series, comes another course called Agitprop. The word stands for “Agitational Propaganda”. It will include writing, media relations, campaigning, rallies, graphic design and layout, of posters, flyers and other materials; and many other things. Some of the things that you would like to be inducted in, may be more thoroughly dealt with under Agitprop.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Political Education, Communist University, c. 2005.](#)

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### **Induction, Part 2b**





# Organisation of Trade Unions

All organisations have “mass”, but not all organisations are vanguards.

## Mass

“Mass organisations” are held together by common experience of a common predicament. They have a narrow focus and they are therefore not vanguard, in the true sense of the vanguard having a broad, concrete, comprehensive, or “helicopter” view. “Mass” organisations are, as a rule, defensive.

As a rule, the narrower the definition, the greater are the number of individuals who can be included in that definition. The category “men”, for example, can include all grown men. Whereas in the category of people who are generalists in politics, there may be very few. The broader the scope, the less will be the number of people who qualify. This is one reason why “mass” organisations are usually bigger than vanguard organisations, but it is not always the case. There are small “mass” (common-interest) organisations, and there are “vanguards” that are relatively larger.

Trade unions are mass organisations of workers, who recognise in each other the common experience of selling themselves as commodity labour power in a market that is dominated by the bosses.

Trade unions began as trade associations (e.g. carpenters, or plumbers, or fitters, or wheelwrights), but modern trade unions are usually organised by industry (e.g. mineworkers, teachers).

## Vanguard

In politics, the word “vanguard” means the professional force, human framework or “cadre” which can lead the mass movement of the people on a revolutionary path. The vanguard Party is made up of professional revolutionaries. The relationship of the revolutionary vanguard to the mass organisations of the people is similar to the relationship of a professional to the professional’s clients, where the professional has the expertise, but the client is the master.

The revolutionary vanguard is a servant, and not a master. The vanguard party of the working class serves the working class, and does not boss it. Nor does it substitute itself for the working class.

The working-class vanguard party, which is a communist party, is not separate from the mass movement. It is intimately involved with the mass movement at all times and at all levels. The vanguard party educates, organises and mobilises. As a vanguard, it must have expert knowledge about how mass movements in general, and especially about how the primary mass organisations of the working class which are the trade unions, work.

### **How trade unions work**

To deal with this crucial matter (i.e. how trade unions work) here, attached, and in the download linked below, is a text from the Marxists Internet Archive's Encyclopaedia of Marxism, written by Brian Basgen and Andy Blunden, two comrades who clearly have vast experience of what they are writing about.

This text is empirical and experiential, and there is nothing wrong with that, because experiential is exactly what trade unions and other mass organisations are. Trade unions arise out of the existing consciousness of workers as it is found under capitalism. In many ways, workers emulate capitalist forms of organisation. Their initial purpose is to get a relatively better money deal in exchange for their labour-power in the capitalist labour-market. Their initial purpose does not include challenging the order of society, let alone expropriating the expropriators.

Trade unions are in the first place reformist, and not revolutionary. Nor can trade unions become revolutionary without the assistance of professional revolutionaries, organised separately as a communist party. Lenin dealt with this relationship in "What is to be Done?", but in this item today we will stay with the practicalities. Suffice it to say, for now, that trade unionists who think that they can dispense with the assistance of a communist party - the ones known as "economists", "workerists" or "syndicalists" - are on a road to ruin.

Basgen and Blunden in their section within this text called "How to build Union" put it this way: "Unions must be built on an immediate, common need of workers." This section, from the bottom of page 6 to page 8 of the document, is an explicit set of suggestions on how to organise from scratch.

- **The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Worker Solidarity and Unions, MIA, 2003](#).**



## Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge, El Lissitsky, 1919

# Mass and Vanguard

We are now at the conclusion of the second part of our Induction course. We have completed our description of the Party, and in a general way, of the mass organisations. The course will now provide materials that will assist in organisational induction for all kinds of purposes; that is, not only in the Party, but also in the non-Party mass movements. It will deal with specific kinds of mass organisation.

Then the course will look at the inter-relationship of such mass organisations within the local environment, and the key role that the Party has to play in these localities, knitting the mass organisations into an alliance. Finally, it will look at the broad organisational tasks that have been set for this and coming years by the Party, and by the movement as a whole, led by the ANC.

At this point, although without a special text, it can assist us to reflect upon the question of Mass and Vanguard. The Mass/Vanguard relationship is somewhat tacit in the literature. It is not often described as a separate problem.

Lack of understanding of the Mass/Vanguard relationship can lead to serious errors of amateurism, and particularly so among new recruits. There can be an urge to “do things as the Party”. Whereas the Party is not the actor on the historic stage. It is the masses, and not the Party, who constitute the “Subject of History” (i.e. the conscious, willing, agent of change). This is why the ANC as the principle mass organisation of the overall liberation movement must lead, and not at some point in the future, but now, in the present time.

If the Party feels obliged to do work that could be done by a mass democratic structure, then the Party is guilty of having failed to organise and mobilise that necessary structure. The Party should not be getting itself into such a situation, as a rule.

When the Party is substituting itself for the masses, it is in error. It will burn up its limited resources like that, and it will neglect its true role – the role of vanguard.

As a communist, you are properly inducted when you know that your main work as a communist has to be done **outside** of the confines of the Party, among people who are not communists. This is why the branch life of the Party is important.

SACP branches provide fellowship and solidarity to the leaders of the working class, and they act as “hubs” for the local alliance of local structures that is the local counterpart of the National Democratic Revolutionary Alliance.

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### Induction, Part 3



## Rules of Debate

One of the matters that fall under the heading of Induction is procedure, and to this there is apt to be a common-sense or spontaneous response, which is nevertheless wrong.

There are always people who think that the Rules of Debate, or Rules of Order, or Procedure of Meetings, are an unnecessary obstruction. Such people are similar to the advocates of “Structurelessness” that we read about in the last part of this course of Induction.

But in fact, the “[Rules of Order](#)”, which go under many different names, are of great assistance. Far from inhibiting, these rules set people free.

Without them, a lot of business would be simply impossible.

The US book “[Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised](#)” puts it like this:

*“The application of parliamentary law is the best method yet devised to enable assemblies of any size, with due regard for every member’s opinion, to arrive at*

*the general will on the maximum number of questions of varying complexity in a minimum amount of time and under all kinds of internal climate ranging from total harmony to hardened or impassioned division of opinion."*

As can be seen from this quotation, "Robert's Rules" is quite verbose. But you can get the idea. This is a way to get business done. For this reason, the Rules of Debate and Procedure of Meetings are crucial to the democracy of mass organisations, just as much as they are crucial for parliaments and municipalities, and for board meetings or shareholders' meetings of companies and co-operatives.

The South African Communist Party has no given Rules of Debate or Standing Orders. Unfortunately this does not prevent people from claiming "Points of Order". A remedy and rescue from such chaotic "Points of Order" would be the adoption of an authority, of which there are many to choose from. But the problem of people not knowing the rules would remain.

Rules are only effective to the extent that they are understood in common by the members of any particular gathering, and enforced by these members on each other through their servant, the chairperson. Hence the problem becomes one of conscientising people, so as to develop a common culture or collective understanding of these rules and procedures.

Wal Hannington was well known as a communist leader of the unemployed workers' movement in Britain in the 1930s. Our summary of the Rules of Debate and Procedure of Meetings from his 1950 booklet "Mr Chairman" is attached.

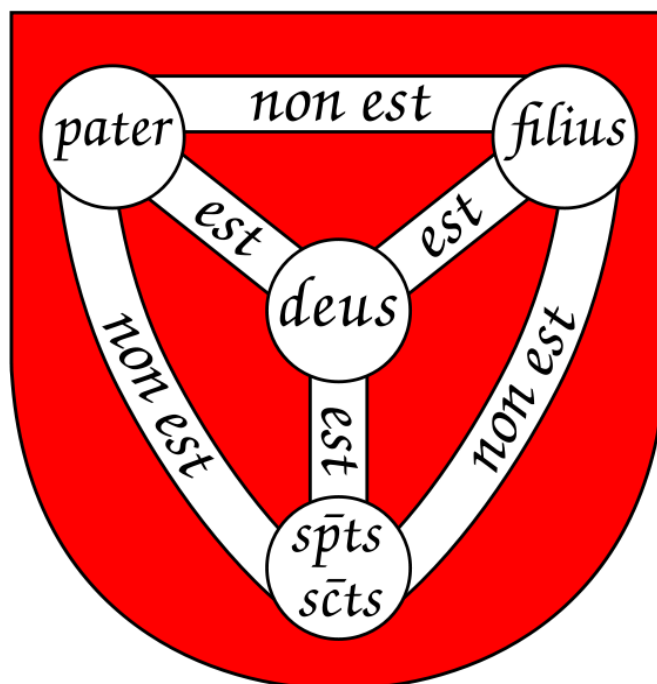
Hannington wrote: "The Chairman is there to guide the meeting, not to boss it." This is the most valuable message in his book. To repeat, with a different emphasis, what was said at the beginning: The Rules of Debate and the Procedures of Meetings are only justified to the extent that they liberate the people present in a meeting. They tend to become useless, or possibly worse than useless, when they are imposed as a burden, or used as an obstruction.

The point is not for the Chairperson to "keep order", or for individuals to be bullied down with "points of order". The Chairperson serves the meeting, and the meeting needs to know how to guide the Chairperson.

Everything works best when everybody is familiar with the common Rules of Debate.

- **The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Hannington, Rules of Debate and Procedures of Meetings](#).**





## Secretary, Chairperson and Treasurer

In the SACP Constitution, the duties of the General Secretary, National Chairperson and National Treasurer are spelled out in detail. But for Provincial, District and Branch Office Bearers in the SACP, although the three positions are all mentioned, the detail is not given.

For a general discussion of what these elected officers are supposed to do, in the SACP, one must draw from the national level and treat it as the model for the lower levels of structure.

Party members are also involved in the ANC, the trade unions, other mass organisations and many other structures. There is some variation, but in general the functions of the three principal officers are similar in all organisations.

The attached document is adapted from a page on the Internet, chosen from among many similar ones on the topic. It can serve to represent the standard thinking on the roles of the three main officer positions, even in quite different types of organisation, and in different countries.

President is another name for Chairperson. Secretary-General and General Secretary are both in fact Secretaries. Treasurer-General means Treasurer. In this item we are not discussing nomenclature, but only function.

## **Leading Role of the Secretary**

In the SACP, as in most Communist Parties, the Secretary is the leading office bearer, and therefore is the political leader at any level. The Secretary is continuously involved with nearly everything that happens, both at meetings, and in between meetings.

## **Chairperson**

The previous item has dealt with the Chairperson's function in detail. Here, we can note that in the ANC, the Chairperson is always the senior office-bearer, and so in the ANC the Chairperson has more scope to impose upon the meeting.

In COSATU Unions and in COSATU itself, the President is in theory the senior position, and the President (Chairperson) is a "worker leader" who is not employed by the union, and who does not draw a salary from the union. Mostly these workers retain their former jobs.

But in the COSATU form of organisation, the Secretary (General Secretary) is the head of the full-time employed establishment of the organisation, and is therefore the employer (hiring and firing) of the staff and the person to whom the staff report.

The COSATU form of organisation has proved to be vulnerable to conflict between President and General Secretary.

In general, the duties of the Chairperson are lighter than those of the Secretary or Treasurer, being in the essential task confined to presiding at meetings. It is also easier for somebody to deputise for the Chairperson than for the other tasks. But it is a very important function, nevertheless.

## **Treasurer**

The treasurer should make sure that the assets of the structure are kept securely. These include not only cash but also non-cash assets such as a banner, for a typical branch-level example. The treasurer must be able to produce an account of the assets, usually in the form of a Receipts and Payments account for the year and Balance Sheet as at the year's end, at least.

The treasurer need not personally be the book-keeper and should never be the fund-raiser. Fund-raising is a task that falls upon the organisation as a whole.

## **Convenors, Co-ordinators, and Organisers**

These titles can be useful where there is a clear sub-division of responsibility within a structure, but they can also be a sign of weak organisation. This is particularly the

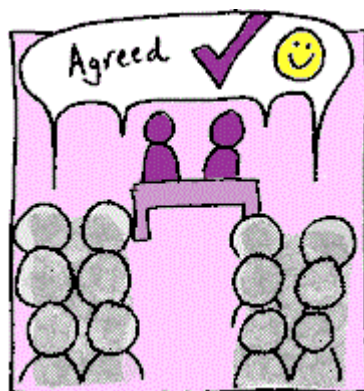
case when they are used as substitutes for Chairperson or Secretary. There can really be no substitute for those offices.

Convenor is a useful designation for the leader of a small task team. Organiser is a good term for someone whose responsibility is to recruit and expand the organisation.

“Co-ordinator” is not a word that fits well in any structure. It is best not used, ever. The problem with such words is that they do not assist to define the organic and necessary functions, but on the contrary, are intended to blur the distinction between functions. As such they are anti-organisation and for that reason should be avoided.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, SCVO, 2010.](#)
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### Induction, Part 3b



## Minute-taking

It is part of a Secretary's responsibility to make sure that contemporaneous records of meetings are kept. Such records are called “minutes”.

The Secretary of an organisation or structure within an organisation will often be the one to take such minutes, but sometimes another person could do it, thereby setting the Secretary free to take a more active part in the meetings. In some organisations, there may be an official called a “Minute Secretary”, whose main job it is to keep the minutes.

On other occasions, an *ad hoc* “scribe” might be appointed to minute a gathering.

It is therefore a normal part of what a cadre might be asked to perform. It is advisable to consider what might be involved, so that one can do this thing, if and when called upon to do so.

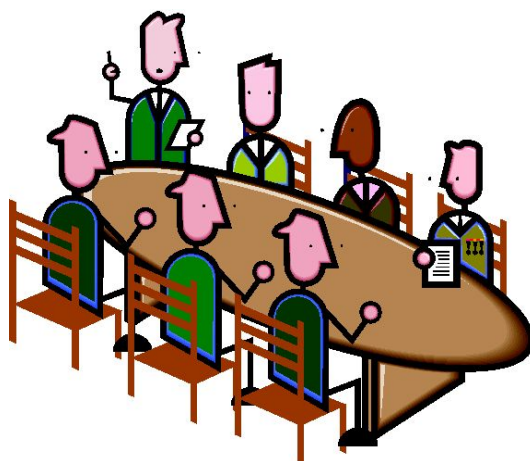
The attached document has been compiled as a general and common manual on minute-taking. It is printable as an 8-page booklet.

In any particular case, in whatever organisation one might be working, it would be as well to look at how the minutes of that organisation have previously been done. This is so as to know what the members are used to, but not to make one shy about improving practice in that organisation, if such improvement is necessary.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Minute-taking](#).

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### Induction, Part 3c



## Sub-Committees and Task Teams

So far, for the purposes of this first iteration of our course, we have not yet found a good document discussing sub-committees and task teams. We await the discovery of a suitable discussion text. Please assist if you can.

Sub-committees are an integral part of the overall structural system that is used by political parties, parliaments and councils, businesses and co-operatives. Sub-committees are normal.

In the South African Communist Party, the Central Committee is a sub-committee of the National Congress, and the Political Bureau is a sub-committee of the Central Committee.

“Working Committees” such as the National Working Committee of the ANC, are sub-committees, and in that specific case, a sub-committee of the National Executive Committee. Similarly, a Provincial Working Committee in the SACP is a sub-committee of the corresponding Provincial Executive Committee.

In a Branch of the SACP or the ANC, the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) is a sub-committee of the Branch, and is therefore subordinate to the Branch General Meeting (BGM).

In the SACP, the Provincial Working Committee reports to the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC), and the PEC reports to the Provincial Council or to the Provincial Congress.

In practice such sub-committees have a lot of freedom, but the above is the constitutional position and it becomes the practical matter if and when there are disagreements between main committees and their subordinate structures. In the case of such disagreements, higher structures rule, and lower ones submit.

Task teams, or ad hoc committees, may be set up to perform tasks of limited duration.

Specialised sub-committees may be formed for the delegation of particular, but on-going, responsibilities. Such could be a Political Education Sub-Committee, or a Fundraising Sub-Committee, for example.

In sub-committees, all the functions of any structure are reproduced, but because sub-committees are usually smaller in numbers, it may happen that functions have to be combined in the same individual. A “Convenor”, for example, might have to combine the functions of Chairperson and Secretary.

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#### Induction, Part 4





# Negotiation

The procedure of the Communist University in its previous courses has worked well, but it is not so easy to follow consistently in this course on Induction.

We have nearly always been able to present up to four alternative texts in any week, using one of them as the default leading text. The introductions (openings to discussion) have been written like short book reviews of the original material that is at the same time given in the form of PDF files.

We have continued to do this in the first three parts of this “Induction” course, but as we come to the fourth part, it becomes less convenient.

This part is broadly concerned with Corporations, including both co-operatives and companies. The next three weekly parts will deal with Office Processes, Fundraising and Events, and Mass Organisations.

In live discussion, we will have to try to take all these four items into account.

In the case of Negotiation, we are taking it this time as a pre-requisite for understanding business. It will be followed within this part by Contract and Company Law plus Juristic Persons; Entrepreneurship, Trading, and Markup; and Co-operatives and Joint-Stock Companies. The four items will be constructed as a series with the intention of creating an outline of corporate entities, including, but not limited to, trading entities. Political parties, trade unions and similar entities also have some of the characteristics of corporations formed under the law, as do NGOs.

We are still using the MIA document on Negotiation (attached, and downloadable via link below) that we have used in other courses. It describes negotiation in terms of trade union practice. But negotiation happens in all kinds of different situations. Negotiation precedes contract.

The document described many of the practical realities that can take place during the approach to a “deal”. The deal itself will be a contract. We will look at formal contract law in the item that follows this one.

Negotiation is a universal skill used in any kind of business. What may be learned for the purposes of trade union business will be applicable in many other circumstances, including the circumstances of private individuals.

- **The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Marxists Internet Archive, Negotiation](#).**



["Leviathan"](#), a vision of The State, Thomas Hobbes 1651

## The Law of Contract

Property, the State, the suppression of women, and the Law of Contract come into being at the same moment in any given society, though these developments happened earlier in some societies than in others.

The above illustration is a detail from the Frontispiece (made by Abraham Bosse) of the Englishman Thomas Hobbes' book "Leviathan", published in Paris, France, in 1651, the year before Jan van Riebeeck came to the Cape.

The image is a representation of The State, and Hobbes' book describes The State in this composite form for the first time in the book. This State is the combination of all, and the guarantor of all.

Among other things, this State enforces Contracts, and through the enforcement of Contracts, it guarantees the rights of the holders of property.

When people negotiate a contract (i.e. when an offer is followed by an acceptance), the contract is enforceable by the State through the law courts. A contract freely entered into by two individuals is therefore enforceable by the State.

Please see the attached document for more on Contracts, and for an explanation of the variation of practice of Contract Law that provides for Tenders.

### **Juristic Persons**

Contract law was developed to deal with the trading relations and the property of individual human beings.

The term “Juristic Person” refers to an entity, or institution, that is treated under the law as if it was a single human being. These are also referred to as “corporations” (from the Latin “corpus”, meaning “body”). Their existence is defined by various laws governing the creation of companies, co-operatives, trade unions, municipalities, NGOs and other kinds of corporate associations.

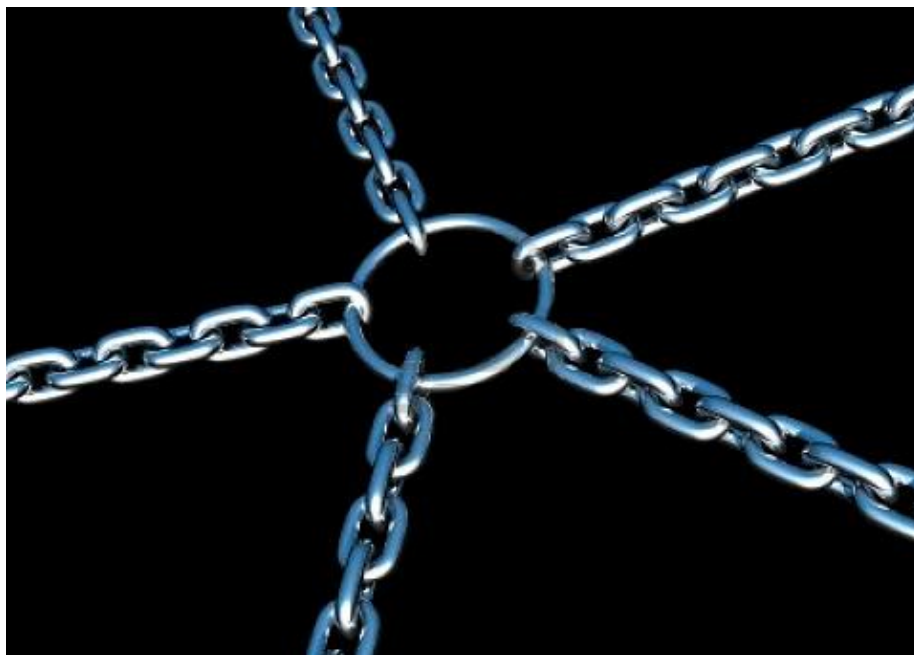
Juristic Persons can be parties to contracts. They can sue and be sued in the courts of law. They can be fined and punished in other ways (but not imprisoned). They do not die in the way that biological human beings do, but they can be “wound up” so that they no longer exist.

Political parties can be Juristic Persons, if they choose to be. The SACP is one.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Contracts and Tenders Explained, Hypercube, 2004](#).

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### **Induction, Part 4b**



# Entrepreneurship, Trading, Markup and Cash Flow

In the [Umsebenzi Online of 30 June 2010](#), the SACP General Secretary, Dr Blade Nzimande, wrote that we must **“Fight Tenderpreneurs to defend entrepreneurship!!”**

The GS wrote: *“Entrepreneurs, found in co-operatives, small and medium sized businesses, are all those who genuinely and honestly go about doing business, including tendering for government work.”*

The **attached** short article by Professor Michael Morris, published in 1996 in the Business Day, describes entrepreneurship and also debunks a number of misconceptions about it.

Morris wrote that: *“The entrepreneurial individual recognises a trend, a possibility, an unmet demand. He or she comes up with a concept for capitalising on the trend or demand and does so while the window of opportunity is open.”*

Morris also says: *“Entrepreneurial individuals are opportunity-driven, not resource-driven.”*

Business is driven by the customer. It is not true, as Jean-Baptiste Say used to believe, that supply creates its own demand. The entrepreneur’s job is, first, to identify demand, where demand means people wanting goods or services, who are ready and willing to pay for them promptly, and at a price that will ensure a profit to the entrepreneur. Second, after having discovered demand, the entrepreneur seeks to connect demand to supply, by one means or another.

## Trading

Co-ops in South Africa tend to be set up with the expectation of producing first, to sell later; whereas being an entrepreneur means securing the demand before making (or buying) the supply. The entrepreneur is a trader. As Dr Blade pointed out, co-ops, too, have to be entrepreneurial. They are compelled to trade in the marketplace.

The market is crucial, but contrary to what the bourgeois ideologues keep on saying, the market is not free, or open. It is we, the opponents of monopoly capitalism, who are the true “free-marketeers”. Small businesses, including co-ops, to survive, must have access to markets that are not dominated by predatory monopolistic market-manipulators. And if they are selling to the state, they must be paid on time and in full. These conditions barely exist in South Africa, which has historically been monopolistic in the extreme, and whose government is a notoriously slow payer.

## **Markup**

When a producer of goods or services goes out to sell, the price asked is determined in normal circumstances by calculating the cost of the product, and then adding a “markup” that is a percentage of the cost. In most businesses, markup is typically around fifty per cent of cost, but it could as well be 100%, or 25%. Only in very high-volume trading, such as in some lines, in some supermarkets, will markup be significantly lower than 25%.

The concept of markup is not the same as the concept of profit. Markup is calculated as a percentage of cost, whereas profit is calculated as a percentage of price. So the raw, or “gross profit” equivalent of a 50% markup is 33%, for example.

But “gross profit” is also not actual profit. The real profit of a business will be calculated after the trading is finished, and it will be less by, for example, the cost of goods that cannot be sold for lack of demand. “Overheads” (i.e. rent, communication and other general expenses of the business) must also be deducted.

## **Cash Flow**

What is most important to the survival of a business is “cash flow”. So long as cash is coming in, a business can keep going, but when the cash stops coming in, it must collapse very quickly. In this sense, a business can do without profit. It can make losses for an indefinite amount of time, until the day when there is no more cash.

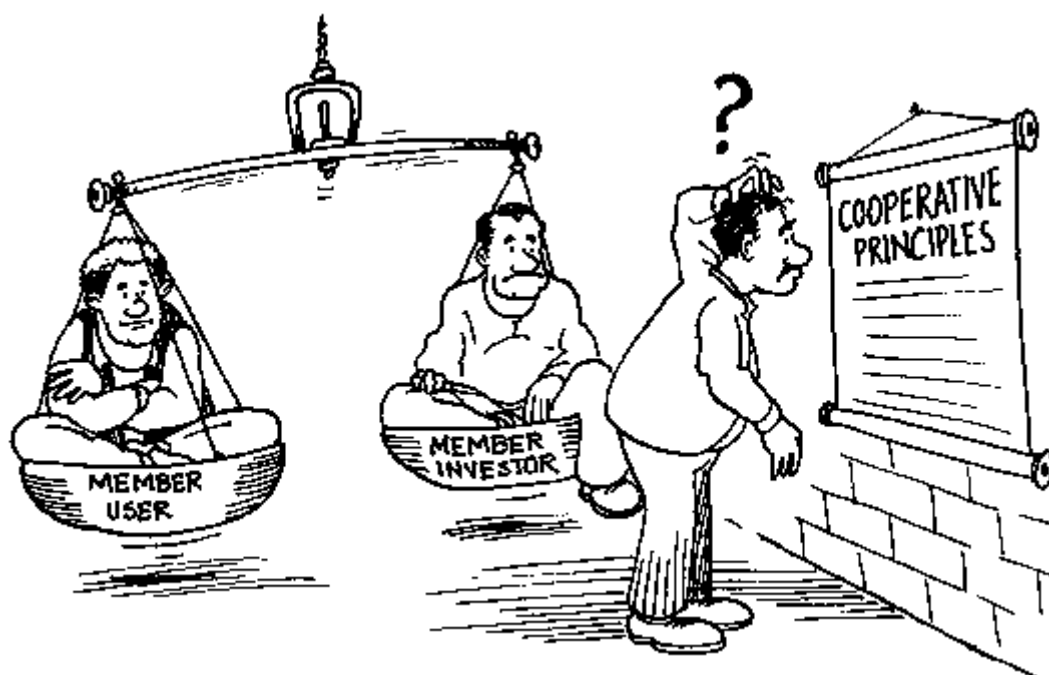
Conversely, a business can collapse even if it is profitable, if there is no cash to keep it going. This can happen if payment is delayed, for example. To avoid such a thing happening, businesses have to look ahead and plan, using a “Cash Flow Forecast”. What is called in popular terms a “business plan” is actually a cash-flow forecast.

Banks and other lenders are hardly concerned about whether a borrower will make profits, or not, but they do want to know if the principal loan can be paid back, with interest. They want to see how the cash will flow. They want to be sure that on the due dates, the business will have money to pay. This is what they look for in a business plan (Cash Flow Forecast).

**Illustration:** “Entrepreneur” means one who “holds together”, as the ring in the picture holds together the chains. Most especially, the business entrepreneur holds together demand and supply.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Dismissing myths of entrepreneurship, Morris, 1996](#).





## Co-operatives and Companies

The attached text was written for this course. It describes joint-stock limited companies, and co-operatives, comparing them to each other. It mentions other, preceding and on-going forms of business institution such as Sole Trader and partnership.

From the strict point of view of Induction, it is our purpose in this course to understand the structure of institutions, and the relations between such institutions.

The above cartoon indicates that co-ops do not escape from the conflict of interest between investors, and users, and workers. They do provide a framework within which the outcome of this conflict can be negotiated.

Now that we have seen some of the organising principles of institutions, we will proceed in the next part to consider some of the detailed means and techniques by which all business institutions do their work.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Co-operatives and Companies, Tweedie, 2013](#).



## Double Entry Book-keeping

In the introduction to this course we noted that:

*[“Double-entry book-keeping”](#) was developed during the Italian Renaissance, in Florence and in Genoa, and was for the first time described as a system by Luca Pacioli, a Franciscan Friar and friend of Leonardo da Vinci’s, in Milan.”*

Historically, double-entry book-keeping coincided with the rise of the bourgeois class over the last 500 years. It is one of the better products of bourgeois development.

Double-entry book-keeping enables individuals and corporations to maintain a constant, detailed record of all their claims and obligations, the consequences of all of the transactions that they perform.

The beneficial owner of any business possesses the assets, minus the liabilities. Taking the owner into account, all of the balances on the books, positive and negative, should in the aggregate, cancel out.

Put in another way, if all the “debits” are added up, they should total the same as all of the “credits”. The “mobile sculpture” in the image above illustrates this idea quite well.

### Cash Book

Small businesses, and entities such as political parties and their branches, do not usually maintain a full “ledger” of accounts all the time, but they record their transactions in a “Cash Book”.



A Cash Book is the minimum form of continuous record that can be sufficient to reconstruct a full record or “ledger”, expressed as a Balance Sheet and an Income and Expenditure (or Profit and Loss) Account.

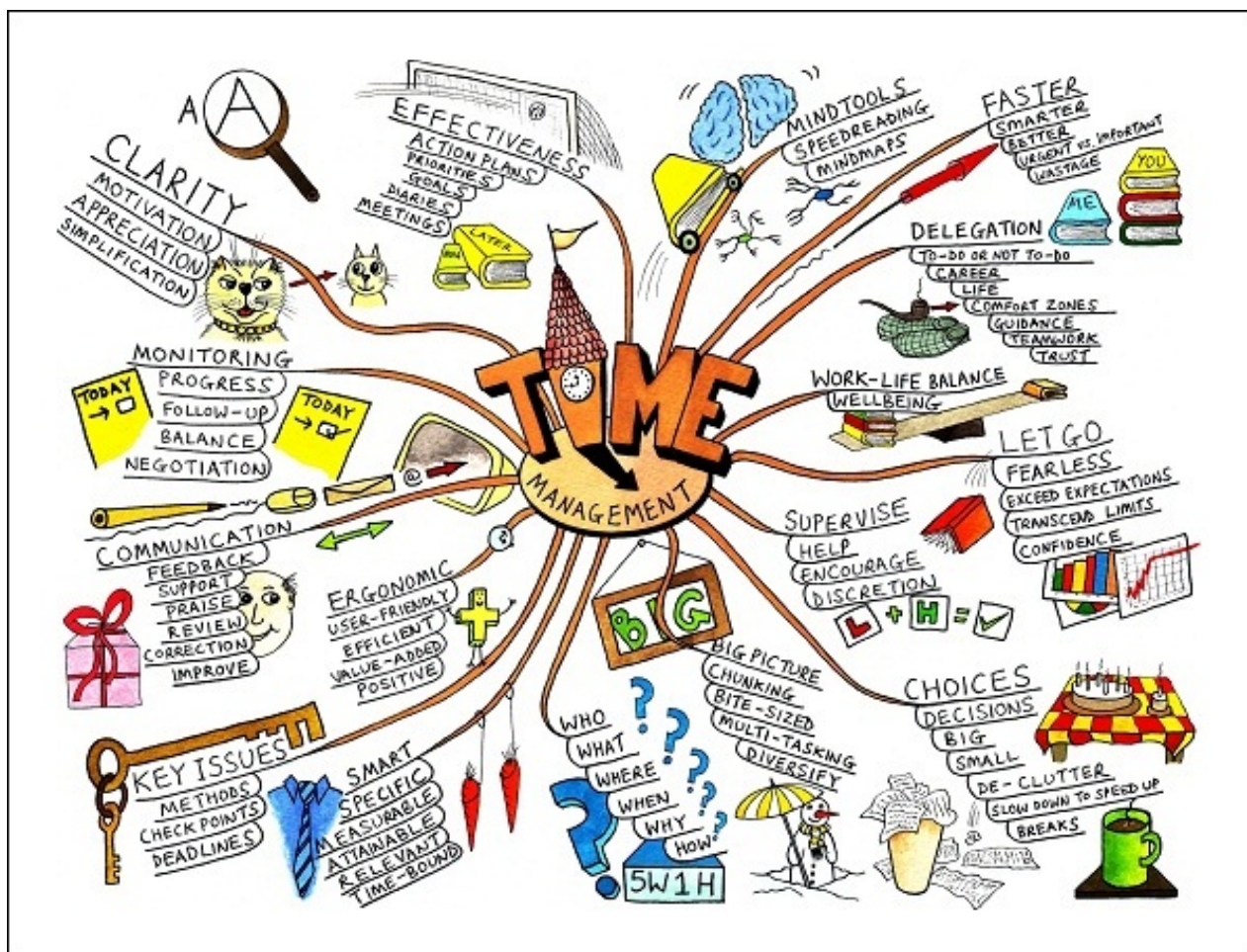
A Cash Book can be summarised as a Receipts and Payments Account, for reporting purposes.

Branches, as well as all higher structures of the SACP, ANC and trade unions, must be able to account for funds given to them, kept by them, and used by them.

At the very least, each structure must keep a Cash Book.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Keeping a Cash Book and other accounts, Tweedie, 2004.](#)

## Induction, Part 5a



# Note-taking

The above illustration is a “Mind Map” made by Tony Buzan.

Buzan makes his living out of spreading study techniques, and we recommend them. Another of his techniques is “The Buzan Organic Study Method”.

Buzan’s web site is at: <http://www.tonybuzan.com/>

The attached document is a review of Buzan’s 1974 book, “Use Your Head”.

## Note-taking

The argument for note-taking is that comrades who are required to write, or to prepare any kind of material, need to be able to order their thoughts. Implied in this is the idea of **research**. Comrades must be able to find out what they need to know for any particular project, and hold that knowledge in a form such that when they need to use it, they can readily find it again.

We will return to the matter of report-writing in the next item of this part. For this part, let us try to take up in a concrete way, Tony Buzan’s conception of the whole complex of learning, fast reading, remembering, and noting, and by implication what follows, which is composing and writing.

The problems of writing are best solved before the writing is commenced. The ordering of the material in a rational, organic way, prior to writing, leaves the writer with relatively little to do, other than to mechanically put the marks on the paper.

Please read the attached. It will help you.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Tony Buzan, Use Your Head, 1974 \(Conspectus by D Tweedie\)](#).
-



## Report-writing, Correspondence and Filing

This item is here by request. People wanted an item on report-writing.

As we have pointed out in the previous item, preparation is the key to the composition of any text. The difficulty of writing arises from lack of preparation. Somebody who is well-prepared and who has researched and organised material will find it hard not to write.

Please therefore read the text together with the previous one.

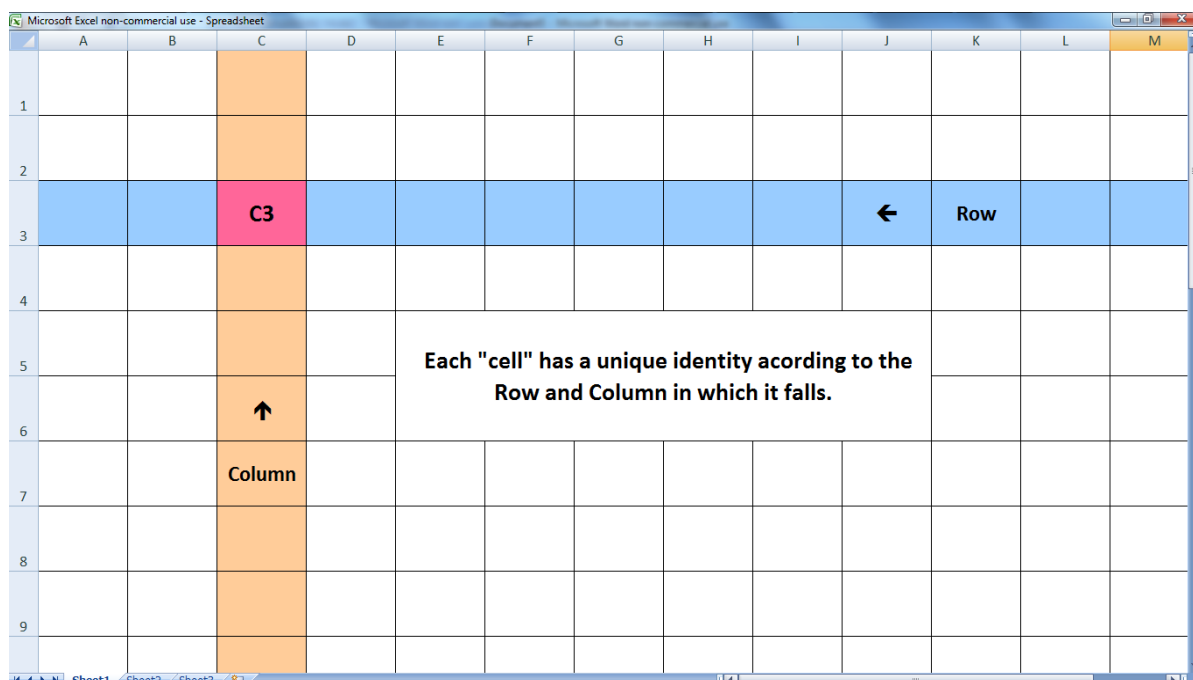
“Report-writing” leads naturally into the matters of correspondence in general and of filing, so the text touches on those.

Then, this item is used to mention several more “necessary capacities” and open them for discussion. These are **Computers; Layout; Venue; and Timetable.**

All these items are related in the sense that they are matters of conscious design. Comrades need to be conscious of them, and be able to discuss them and make decisions about them, and not just take them for granted or regard them as difficult or impossible to improve or change.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Report Writing, Correspondence, Filing and other skills, Tweedie, 2013.](#)

## Induction, Part 5c



# Spreadsheets

Spreadsheets are the same as “tables”, “tabulations” and “schedules”. They are arrangements in rows and columns. This way of arranging data (on paper) has been used for hundreds of years.

Such tables are everywhere around us. Common examples are calendars and year-planners; bus and train timetables; team lists; examination results; television schedules; collection sheets; wage slips; price lists; restaurant menus; parts lists, cutting lists and bills of quantities.

Understanding of spreadsheets is for practical purposes “intuitive”. These arrangements are so familiar as to appear “natural” and “obvious”, and this is part of their intention, and their value.

Spreadsheets can concentrate a lot of data on a single page. They can be used to sort (i.e. to “analyse”) data and to summarise it down to totals and to a single grand total. They tend to create some sort of “mind map”, in the sense of presenting both the parts and the whole, in one go.

This item is intended to introduce and to objectify the broad idea of spreadsheets. The next stage will be for more comrades to begin to use this form of working.

Some simple rules will make your spreadsheets better. Try to keep them on one page, both horizontally and vertically. Use as few columns as possible. Use the biggest font possible. If you use colours, use very pale ones.

This item completes our fifth part on office processes. There could be much more to say about these and other ones, including more about computer software. But the main point here is that numbers of us, if not all of us, must learn, and must continue to learn how to do such basic operations. The common aim should be to build up an internal collective bank of expertise, so that when required, action proceeds efficiently and smoothly.

Office processes have been perfected under the bourgeois dictatorship, mainly as instruments of power over the working class and other classes. To overthrow the bourgeois ruling class, the partisans of our own class – the proletariat – will have to master these common processes.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Spreadsheets, Tweedie, 2013](#).
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**Course: Induction**

**24002, Induction, Intro Booklet 2 of 2**

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